

## Safety planning for shelters/programs

**F**or every call you make, assume your number and name are being revealed to the person you are calling. In order to protect the privacy and safety of your program and victims of domestic violence, you **must** block all outgoing calls. When your calls are blocked, Caller ID subscribers cannot see your number and name and no one can use Return Call (\*69/1169) to connect back to your program.

### Block your lines either with complete line blocking or on a per call basis.

#### Line Blocking:

- *must be ordered* through your phone company
- *automatically blocks* your phone number and name from being transmitted for every call unless you unblock on a per call basis
- is FREE initially for all customers and always for self-identified domestic violence victims, programs, program staff and volunteers in PA
- can be activated on most cell phones (check with your cellular company for more information)

#### Per Call Blocking (\*67/1167):

- must be activated *each time* you place a call if you do not want your number and name revealed
- sounds two short tones before the regular dial tone when activated
- works in all 50 states and is always FREE of charge
- can be activated on most cell phones (check with your cellular company for more information)

**NOTE:** Cellular phone companies are now required by the FCC to transmit phone numbers.

**If you obtain Line Blocking, verify that your lines are actually blocked.**

*Do not assume your lines are blocked!*

- Phone companies may offer a free blocking verification number, so call to double-check.

**or**

- If a trusted friend has Caller ID, make arrangements to test your blocked lines.

### Evaluate options based on privacy/safety needs if your call is rejected.

If your lines are blocked and you place a call to someone using Caller ID with Anonymous Call Rejection (ACR), your call will not go through. Therefore, you have three choices:

- make an operator-assisted call  
(See note on reverse side.)
- use a calling/credit card  
(See note on reverse side.)
- unblock only if you are sure your safety will not be jeopardized

### Educate domestic violence victims.

- Explain complex telephone services, the privacy/safety concerns related to these services and ways victims can protect their privacy and ensure their safety.
- Urge them to use precautions when making all phone calls.
- Encourage them to teach their children about precautions before dialing, how to use 911 and other emergency numbers and how to reach an operator.

*continued...*

**Educate all program staff/volunteers.**

- Explain complex telephone services, the privacy/safety concerns related to these services and ways your shelter/program can protect its privacy and ensure safety.
- Direct staff and volunteers to use precautions when making all phone calls from the shelter/program and from home.

**Do not provide identifying information when answering the phone.**

- Simply answer all phones by saying, "Hello?" or "How can I help you?"
- Providing the name of your shelter/program could tip off a batterer and thereby jeopardize a victim's safety.

**Display blocking information and program policy on or near every phone.**

Stickers with blocking and unblocking codes, as well as your program's telephone policy, should be placed on or near every phone.  
(Request these informational stickers from your phone company.)

**Do not subscribe to Caller ID; it could deter victims from calling hotlines!**

- Privacy and anonymity are essential for hotline callers.
- Victims of domestic violence may be reluctant to call a hotline if they suspect that their numbers and names are being identified through Caller ID.
- Voice mail messages and phone book listings should clearly state that your shelter/program does not use Caller ID and that your lines are blocked.

**Trace harassing phone calls.**

- If your shelter/program is receiving harassing phone calls (perhaps from an abuser who obtained the phone number), use Call Trace (\*57/1157) immediately following such a call to electronically send that phone number to the phone company's anonymous/annoyance call center.
- This service works regardless of whether the caller has blocked his/her lines, but must be activated before you place or receive any other calls.
- The phone company will provide the phone number to the police or other authorities upon your authorization.

NOTE: There is a fee for using Call Trace.

**NOTE ON OPERATOR-ASSISTED AND CALLING/CREDIT CARD CALLS:**

Use caution when placing operator-assisted and calling/credit card calls! Before completing such a call, verify with an operator that the option *will* over-ride Anonymous Call Rejection (ACR) **and** that the phone number and name will not be transmitted to a Caller ID unit. Operator-assisted and calling/credit card calls are options that can protect privacy in some telephone service areas, but not all — and not necessarily for every call. Phone companies in PA will not charge an additional fee for operator-assisted calls placed by self-identified domestic violence victims, programs, program staff and volunteers.



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PCADV TELEPHONE LINES ARE BLOCKED AND WE DO NOT USE CALLER ID